
Vernon K. Hagen

Vernon K. Hagen was born on 3 September 1926 in Roseau, Minnesota. He went to high school in Cando, North Dakota, served in the Army in 1945-1946, and in 1951 received a bachelor of science in engineering from Montana State University.

In the summers of 1949 and 1950, Hagen worked as an engineering aide with the United States Bureau of Reclamation. Upon graduation from Montana State, he continued as a full-time employee with the Bureau, serving in the land acquisition and hydrology sections of the Bureau's Billings, Montana, office. There he plotted the land areas to be acquired in fee or easement and wrote legal descriptions of the real estate. He also performed surveys, measured stream flows, and participated in hydrologic engineering studies for irrigation and hydropower development.

In 1953, Hagen joined the Corps of Engineers and worked in the hydrology sections at Fort Peck, Montana (Fort Peck Dam), and Riverdale, North Dakota (Garrison Dam). In these positions, he continued to develop his skills in hydrologic engineering studies, now expanded to include questions dealing with local flood control and multipurpose reservoir operations. In April 1956 Hagen was promoted to a GS-11 civil engineer, and he transferred to the planning and reports section at Riverdale. His responsibilities grew to encompass the coordination of planning for water resource projects, evaluating the economics of potential projects, and determining cost sharing. In the summer of 1957 Hagen joined the hydraulic design section at Riverdale and conducted hydraulic design studies on spillways, sluice and tainter gates, stilling basins, intakes, channels, pumping stations, drainage facilities, and hydroelectric power plants.

In September 1958 Hagen came to Washington, D.C., and began working as a hydraulic engineer in the hydrologic engineering section in the civil works directorate of the Office of the Chief of Engineers. His major responsibility was to review technical reports prepared by field offices. Arriving in Washington as a GS-12 engineer, Hagen rapidly earned promotion. By August 1961 he was a GS-13 engineer with additional responsibilities. He helped in the development of the Corps' new floodplain management program, served on various interagency committees and work groups, and participated in training sessions. He received a promotion and became chief of the section in April 1967. In that capacity, Hagen oversaw the development of technical guidance to the Corps on hydrologic engineering matters.

In September 1971, Hagen was promoted to GS-15 and became chief of the newly formed hydrologic engineering branch. He remained in that position until 1975, when his branch was consolidated with the hydraulic design branch. Jacob H. Douma headed this consolidated hydraulic and hydrology branch but gave Hagen complete authority in matters dealing with hydrologic engineering. When Douma retired in 1979, Hagen became the new branch chief. He retired from the position in August 1985.

Retired from the Corps, Hagen continued his professional involvement. In 1987, he joined Dewberry and Davis, a Northern Virginia engineering firm, as a senior water resources engineer. During his professional career, Hagen also authored numerous papers and was a member of such committees as the Interagency Advisory Committee on Water Data, the U.S. National Committee on Scientific Hydrology, and committees on flood control and surface water hydrology of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Hagen and his wife, Jessie, have two children. Their daughter is an accountant, and their son is a high school principal.